

## EDITORIAL

### FURTHERING THE DISCOURSE IN POSTCOLONIAL EDUCATION

Over the years we have been witnessing a proliferation of literature dealing with ‘post-colonialism’. This term is being applied to the situation in which many countries, regions and social groups find themselves in the aftermath of the formal ending of colonialism. This is a chronological use of ‘post’ colonialism, but postcolonial theory also draws attention to a usage that is conceptual and philosophical. All these usages of the term have gained currency in research in education.

We feel therefore that the time is opportune to introduce a journal that provides rigorous research in the area. It is for this reason that we are launching *Postcolonial Directions in Education*, a journal that we hope will, through its open access format, attract large readership from both the global North and South.

There is enough discursive and research interest in this area to have made this a viable proposition. As you can see, we have assembled an excellent editorial advisory board for this journal, a board that will ensure that each submission will be rigorously and anonymously reviewed before a decision is taken as to whether it should be published or not. The board includes some of the leading figures in the field of postcolonial education and postcolonial struggles in general.

This project is to be distinguished from comparative education or development education since these are broader areas that embrace a variety of

perspectives, including perspectives that can be well at odds with the postcolonial ethos. While comparative perspectives are welcome, and indeed much of the scholarship in postcolonial education promotes or implies a global and comparative context, postcolonial scholarship does not necessarily have a comparative dimension. Studies in the area can focus on specific settings, including single countries, regions, figures, movements, forms of cultural production, self-reflective educational histories and indigenous education. Postcolonial education also extends beyond the mainly economic and 'third world' contexts that constitute prominent features of development education; a site of postcolonial enquiry can well be located in the 'first world' and deal with matters such as diasporas, uneven levels of industrial development (as for instance in Italy), inter-ethnicity, and benefits of socio-economic domination to ruling elites. It is true that articles on postcolonial education have often featured in comparative education journals, since there has been no natural 'home' for these writings. These are often one-off journal issues. Postcolonial education has a specific focus.

## **Postcolonialism and Education**

The term 'postcolonialism' is being used in an all-embracing manner. It accounts for processes of domination that have their origin in European colonisation. These processes extend beyond the period of direct colonisation to take on new forms, notably those of neo-colonialism, dependency and the intensification of globalisation. Postcolonial theory

probes identity, knowledge, and social, cultural and economic structures in historical context. This leads us to consider the implications of the word 'directions' in the title of the journal. By exploring indigenous, local, and creole or blended knowledges, research in the postcolonial paradigm takes the direction of uncovering and rebuilding the autonomous yet hybrid identity of those dispossessed by imperialist dominance. It puts us on the path of challenging, countering, and helping to reshape political structures that have their roots in colonialism and imperialism.

As a site of struggle, education has constituted as a key vehicle for the 'colonisation of the mind.' In the words of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o:

Colonialism imposed its control of the social production of wealth through military conquest and subsequent political dictatorship. But its most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonised, the control through culture, of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control. To control a people's culture is to control their tools of self-definition in relationship to others. (Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, 1981, p. 16)

We therefore consider it appropriate to have a forum that focuses on education, an important vehicle for both the inculcation and unlearning of colonial ideologies. This makes a stance for education that challenges the situation described by A. Mishra Tarc,

in R. Coloma's (2009) *Postcolonial Challenges in Education*, "Postcolonial studies are slow to come to education, in part because postcolonial studies threaten to undo education, to unravel the passionately held-onto thought and knowledge of the modern Western-educated student and scholar." The journal will complement other discussions of postcolonialism with respect to political economy, literature and the interdisciplinary domain of cultural studies.

We welcome debate and contestation over the educational implications of various interpretations of postcolonial theory. This includes interpretations from scholars who accuse it as being not sufficiently 'anti' colonial to make an activist difference, those who argue that on the contrary, anti-colonialism is embedded in postcolonial discourse, which is much more than only oppositional, and those who, in the manner of much 'post' thinking, prefer to identify how various discourses have created meaning systems which shape dominant and subordinated thought, behaviour, texts and structures within different epistemes.

The areas falling within the purview of this journal are legion and the list cannot be exhaustive. In fact one of the challenges for anyone contributing to the field is to discover and help establish new areas of inquiry related to the broad issue of postcolonialism. Articles submitted to the journal could deal with such areas as:

- Colonial experiences in education and their legacies for present day educational structures and practice

- Educational experiences reflecting the culture and ‘imagination’ of empire
- The impact of neoliberalism, globalisation and structural adjustment programmes on education
- Colonial and neo-colonial curricula, and subaltern alternatives
- Education and liberation movements
- Challenging hegemonic languages, the promotion of local literacies and linguistic diversity.
- Critical multiculturalism
- Neo-colonial education and identity construction
- Colonialism and the construction of patriarchy
- Canon and canonicity
- Indigenous knowledges
- Supranational bodies and their educational frameworks
- North-south, east-west relations in education
- The politics of representation; unlearning colonial stereotypes
- Internal colonialism and education
- Cultural hybridity and learning in postcolonial contexts
- Anti-racist education including critical race theory
- Education and the politics of dislocation
- Biographies / autobiographies reflecting the above themes
- Deconstruction of colonial narratives of civilization within educational contexts

Socio-economic inequity in education would be a foundational aspect of postcolonial analysis. Other articles may include analyses of the limits of conventional educational reform when the colonial legacy is not challenged. They may focus on exploring postcolonial experiments in transforming education, looking beyond the 'West is Best' mindset. They may discuss 'eduscapes' of the postcolonial world: transforming education; decolonizing the curriculum; histories of changing subjects in (x country); feminism and education: postcolonial perspectives. Postcolonial discussions include such vital questions as 'whose language?' and 'Whose history?' and would explore the decolonization of curricula in these and other areas.

We are also open to publishing material that challenges the concept of postcolonial education, or which highlights what the author/s perceive as its limitations. We are interested in generating a fruitful debate in this regard. As a matter of fact, this first issue includes an article, the one by Simmons and Dei, which falls within this category. As William Blake would argue, 'without contraries is no progression.'

## **Language**

While the language to adopt will be English, we ought to recognise the contradictory situation this often poses for people working in postcolonial contexts. We propose two innovative approaches in this regard.

- Authors may electronically provide an abstract in their native language, as can be seen from the inaugural issues of the journal.
- Reviews (in English) may be submitted of books written in any language, thus giving visibility to an array of works relevant to the area of postcolonial research. We will obviously look for reviewers who know the language in which the texts are written but who can write their reviews in English.

Our reviews section invites reviews not only of published works, but also of conferences, symposia, exhibitions etc. relevant to the area of postcolonial studies in education. The activities within the Postcolonial Studies SIGS of the conferences of the AERA and CIES constitute fine examples of activities that can be reviewed in this journal. This issue includes a review of the 2012 AERA Postcolonial Education Business meeting held at Vancouver during which members were briefed about the journal and one of the editors gave the keynote address.

## **Frequency**

We are starting with the modest goal of providing two issues a year. This decision is not cast in stone and we hope that we will receive so many submissions of high quality that we will be able to consider in future the possibility of further issues within a single year.

## **Complementary sources**

We take this opportunity to remind readers of an existing complementary source, a book series which we co-edit with our colleague, Professor Antonia Darder, for Palgrave Macmillan, under the rubric of 'Postcolonial Studies in Education'. Seven volumes have already been published in the series, and others are in the production line. This has placed us in touch with a number of authors discussing important themes in postcolonial education, who can contribute to the journal in many ways. Antonia Darder will herself have a paper that will appear in the next issue for this year. Vanessa Andreotti authored *Actionable Postcolonial Theory in Education*, one of the books in the series which won an AERA outstanding book award and which is being reviewed in this issue. The possibilities for the extension of published scholarship in the field look promising and we trust that, with the help of readers and the research community, this journal will make a significant contribution to scholarship.

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*Editors.*